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BIDDULPH URBAN DISTRICT




Annual Report

of

Medical Officer of Health for 1937

PREPARED BY
JAMES CRAIG, M.B., M.R.C.S.
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE DISTRICT



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BIDDULPH URBAN DISTRICT

1937

Section A. Statistics and Social Conditions of the area.

Area in acres	...	...	...	...	...	6647
Registrar General's Estimate of resident population (middle of 1937)	...	...	...	...	...	9741
Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1937) according to Rate Book	...	...	...	...	...	2649
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£28,310
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	£95.7875

Rainfall for 1937

Figures kindly supplied by Mr. Ostick, Clerk and Steward
at Biddulph Grange Orthopædic Hospital.

January	... 4.17	April	... 3.87	July	... 3.94	October	... 2.09
February	... 5.73	May	... 2.33	August	... 2.26	November	... 1.36
March	... 2.45	June	... 1.39	September	1.28	December	... 3.68

Total Rainfall for year : 34.55 inches.

The rainfall for the latter half of the year was rather below the average.

Natural Conditions.

The heavy rainfall during January and February was responsible for the great amount of "Influenza and Colds" reported from the schools. The effect on general health is also reflected in the increased mortality in aged people during the first quarter of the year. In the latter half of the year the pleasant weather of the autumn months continued some weeks longer than usual. The absence of any severe night frosts left gardens almost untouched until the end of October. But the heavy snowfalls during the last week in November and the first two weeks of December were accompanied by alternate frosts and thaws, which not only made travelling difficult but led to the accumulation of road refuse which could not be cleared away. This probably contributed to the outbreak of diphtheria which occurred towards the end of the year.

Social Conditions.

There was a definite improvement in employment during 1937, particularly in the first half of the year. The percentage of unemployed, at one time 40, and for the last 3 years hovering round 24 - 25, fell to 22. Not a very striking change, yet it means that 1937 has been on the whole the best of the last 10 years.

The mines and the engineering works were fully employed, and brickmaking was active. Fewer houses were built and quarrying was not very active. A Refractories firm established a small works at one of the quarries. Marl clay is now being sent into the potteries for saggar-making.

The textile factories in neighbouring towns did very well in the early part of the year but after August unemployment was rife, which affected many Biddulph women and girls who work there. This applies also to our local factory for Rayon ribbon weaving, which was busily occupied until the Coronation, but afterwards experienced the slackness in demand which affected textiles in general.

It is unfortunate that the irregular employment in textiles has to a large extent neutralised the better employment in the mines. But for this our figures of unemployment would have showed more recovery. A good feature is the new Silica mill, as that is a new industry. We had the Rayon works in 1936, and should we get a new industry each year, prosperity may yet return. What is badly needed is some factory or works employing men.

The readers on the Library Register still continue to increase and it was decided to have a salaried Librarian. It was felt to be unreasonable to expect the work of the library to be done any longer by voluntary helpers. They had done the work remarkably well and the thanks of the community are due to them, for the many hours they gave up to the performance of this voluntary duty.

The Personal Service League still functions, but owing to improved conditions, its services are not often called upon.

The Biddulph Branch of the British Legion continues actively its very useful and necessary work.

Another Course of W.E.A. lectures started in the autumn, but the attendance did not mark much improvement in the number of those who desire to make use of the facilities for self-improvement offered by the Course.

Vital Statistics.

Estimated population middle of 1937 = 9741

				Males.	Females
Live Births	Legitimate	...	...	88	89
	Illegitimate	...	...	1	4
	Total	...	...	89	93
Still Births	Legitimate	...	...	4	5
	Illegitimate	...	...	—	—
Death of Infants under 1 year				4	4

Total Live Births 182. Birth-rate = 18·68

Still Births 9. Rate per 1000 live and still births = 47·12.

Deaths.

In this matter there is a definite disparity between my figures compiled locally and those supplied to me by the Registrar General. The deaths as shown by my registers number 108, while the tables supplied from Somerset House debit Biddulph with 115 deaths. I

Vital Statistics — Amended Figures

Causes of Death in Biddulph Urban District 1937

(Registrar General S. D. 30)

						Males	Females
All Causes	...	...	...	...	...	61	47
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	6	7
Cerebro-spinal Fever	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
Respiratory Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	1	3
Other Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
Syphilis	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
Diabetes	...	...	...	...	...	—	2
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	5	3
Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	...	17	7
Other Circulatory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	4	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Peptic Ulcer	...	...	...	...	...	2	—
Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
Liver Diseases (other than Cirrhosis)	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Other Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Senility	...	...	...	...	...	—	3
Suicide	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Other forms of violence	...	...	...	...	...	4	2
Other defined diseases	...	...	...	...	...	7	3

have informed the Register Office of this difference, and have supplied various lists at their request. No doubt the discrepancy will be cleared up in time. But the Ministry of Health expects my Annual Report to be issued "not later than the middle of May" and this matter has already caused over a week's delay, so I think it better to publish figures and calculations based on my own returns. Should correction be found necessary, this can be reported later.

As regards deaths of Infants under 1 year, the figures agree : 8
Deaths 108. Death rate per 1000 estimated population = 11.08
Our Comparability Factor is 1.13 which makes the death rate = 12.5
Deaths from puerperal sepsis and other puerperal causes ... 0
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :—

All infants per 1000 live births	...	...	...	43.9
Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate live births	...	...	...	45.19
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births	...	...	...	0
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	5
„ „ Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	0
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	0
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	0

B. General Provision of Health Services for the Area.

1. Public Health Officers of the Authority.

- (i) James Craig, M.B., Edinburgh, M.R.C.S., England.
(not in general practice) Medical Officer of Health.
Mr. S. Gibson, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.

- (ii) No changes or developments in the services provided.

Ambulance arrangements continue to work satisfactorily.

There is still no provision for nursing in the home.

Biddulph is one of the combined districts to which belongs West Heath Sanatorium (the Infectious Diseases Hospital.) Other than this there is no hospital belonging to the Local Authority. But great use is made of the facilities for treatment afforded by various Voluntary Hospitals in neighbouring districts, and it seems fitting that a record should be given in this matter. The following statistics have been kindly supplied to me by the hospital authorities :—

North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary.

Inpatients 92, Outpatients 215, In year ending 31st Oct. 1937.
From Oct. 14th to December 31st, 7 Radium Cases. 2 cancer cases treated by Deep Ray treatment.

Orthopaedic Hospital, Hartshill.

Inpatients 3. Outpatients 62.

Congleton War Memorial Hospital.

Inpatients 42. Outpatients 76.

West Heath Sanatorium (Infectious Diseases Hospital)

Inpatients 64 :—Scarlet Fever 28, Diphtheria 35, Dysentery 1.

Section C. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

(i) **WATER.** The new reservoirs and extensions of mains have been fully described in previous reports. In March, the Council, accompanied by various members of the public, met at the covered reservoir at Biddulph Park for formal recognition of the completion of these works. In accordance with the year and the circumstances the name of "Coronation Reservoir" was given to it.

As all the sources of supply had been examined in December 1936 and found satisfactory both chemically and bacteriologically it was not thought necessary to have this repeated in 1937, but the supply to one small area was examined and found to be all right.

The result of this analysis is appended.

County Bacteriological Laboratory, Martin Street, Stafford.

Report on Bacteriological Examination of a Sample of Water submitted on 6th April 1937 at 3-30 p.m. by Biddulph Urban District Council.

Dial Lane Spout.

COUNT. On nutrient agar after 48 hours incubation at 37° c. 2 colonies per ml
On nutrient agar after 72 hours incubation at 20-22° c. 85 cols per ml
Coli Aerogenes Content (presumptive coli) none per 100 ml after 48 hours incubation at 37° c.

This sample shows no bacteriological evidence of recent sewage pollution.

J. MENTON, Bacteriologist.

County Chemical Laboratory, County Buildings, Stafford.

Certificate of Analysis — Sample of Dial Spring Water, taken at 12 noon on Tuesday, 6th April 1937

	Parts per 100,000
Total Solid Matter dried at 212 deg. F	14.5
Free and Saline Ammonia	0.0015
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.0040
Nitric Nitrogen	0.15
Chlorine	1.6
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hours at 80 deg. F	0.047
Appearance	Clear
Injurious Metallic Contamination	None
pH Value... ..	7.0

This water is chemically of satisfactory quality, and if passed bacteriologically may be considered suitable for drinking.

ERNEST V. JONES, F.I.C., County Analyst.

(ii) **DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE:**—By the end of the year all the necessary plans and drawings were completed in connection with the mains and sewage disposal works proposed. These come under two groups or areas, which are quite independent of each other. The more costly will be the proposals in connection with the Southern or Knypersley End of the area with disposal works near Mill Hayes. The Northern Section will have its disposal works on land already belonging to the Council, where the beds will be at a lower level than those already in use. This also will mean a heavy outlay, though it is estimated to cost rather less than the Southern section.

Where new houses are being built mains are being laid so as to be ready when the main scheme comes into use.

2. RIVERS AND STREAMS :—Little can be done to check pollution at present, but when the new sewerage plans are completed it will be possible to take more efficient measures.

3. (vi) There are no public or privately owned swimming baths or pools open to the public.

(vii) Eradication of Bed bugs. No action was taken. I am not aware of any house infested with bugs.

4. All the Schools in the district are public elementary schools, and all of them are on the public water supply. The Central Schools are on water sanitation ; other schools are not, but in all cases the sanitary conditions are good.

School Closures during the year :—The only closure during the year was Knypersley Mixed School, from 25th January till 1st February for "Influenza" affecting both children and staff.

Section D. Housing.

The building of houses by private enterprise has slackened somewhat, only 59 such being added to the Ratebook during the year. The majority of these houses were built for sale by Building Societies and speculative builders. This fact led to there being approximately 60 houses "void" at the end of the year, rather more than the average number marked "void" in the Rate-books, which is usually about 30-35. As the numbers of new houses and "void" houses are almost exactly equal one might draw the inference that the demand for houses has been met, and that we have in fact reached saturation point. I find myself unable to accept this facile explanation. What has happened is I think as follows :

Families desiring a house find none to let, and enter into agreements for what one may call "hire-purchase" by which in addition to the rent, they bind themselves to pay an additional sum towards redemption of the purchase price. These instalments are often paid weekly, and many tenants find it impossible to keep up a weekly payment which includes rent, rates and contribution towards purchase. Sooner or later they vacate the house which then becomes "void." Many of these families are new-comers to the district.

The following table shows the number of houses erected in Biddulph during the past few years, the first year of the list belonging to the "old order" of things.

New assessments in year	1931 - 2	...	...	10	
"	"	"	1932 - 3	...	41
"	"	"	1933 - 4	...	117
"	"	"	1934 - 5	...	149
"	"	"	1935 - 6	...	141
"	"	"	1936 - 7	...	138
"	"	"	1937 - 8	...	59

This table shows an addition in 7 years of 645 houses.

The number of inhabited houses (end of 1937) was	2649
„ „ „ voids (all new houses) approximately	60
Making a total of	2709
The estimated population (middle of 1937)	9741
Average number per house = 3·6 (3·59)	

Though the majority of the houses built in recent years are of the small type, they have not solved the problem of houses to rent, and we have a waiting list, varying in numbers it is true, but as a rule numbering from 30 to 35, generally for houses of the small type.

During the year the Council considered the building of houses for large families, and decided that 8 of these were required. A site was available, but a grant towards the cost was then improbable. And about this time it became publicly known that in the following year building for “overcrowding” would be put on the same footing as building for “slum clearance,” so it was decided to wait until this proposed Act came into force.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :—

1 (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	72
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	114
2 (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub- head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	—
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	—
3 Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be un- fit for human habitation	7
4 Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	19

2. Remedy of defects during the Year without Service of formal Notices :

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	60
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year :— Nil.

4. Housing Act, 1936.—Part IV.—Overcrowding :—

(a).—	(i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	65
	(ii) Number of families dwelling therein	70
	(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	392
(b).—	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	0
(c). (i)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	3
	(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases	28

Section E. Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.—Much improvement is to be found in the dairies and cowsheds, particularly as regards light and ventilation. The question of water supply, which had become very acute in the high-lying farms during recent dry years, has been solved by the extension of the public supply to the great majority of them. The remainder have springs and wells to rely upon. In a good many cases new cowsheds have been erected, and also dairies. Others are being improved. The desire to obtain the certificate for the production of accredited milk leads to ready compliance with alterations and improvements suggested.

The inspection of milk, samples, etc., are dealt with by the County Council's staff.

(b) MEAT AND OTHER FOODS :—The quality of meat of all kinds consumed in the district is of a high standard. Slaughter houses are regularly inspected and no complaints concerning them have been made during the year.

ANIMALS EXAMINED DURING THE Year :—

Cattle, excluding Cows	..	...	...	...	2
Cows	...	...	...	...	264
Calves	...	...	...	...	13
Sheep and Lambs	...	...	...	...	659
Pigs	...	...	...	...	309

Whole carcases condemned — None.

Sanitary Inspector's Report, 1937.

WATER SUPPLY :—The supply to the district throughout the year has been well maintained and highly satisfactory in quality.

The supply is now available through Council's mains to practically the whole of the district, the exceptions being certain parts of Mow Cop, Biddulph Moor and Lask Edge which continue to be served by springs and wells.

The continual extension of the area of supply automatically increases the demand on the yield, and this increased consumption will ultimately require measures to be taken to provide additional water at source. The position is not by any means serious at the moment but it is a matter which should be borne in mind.

The year 1937 was a comparatively "dry" year, and the natural sources of supply generally have suffered in consequence.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE :—It is anticipated that during the year 1938 the Council's new Scheme will be commenced.

The general provisions of the new Scheme include a new Disposal Works at Mill Hayes to deal with the Southerly part of the district and approximately 11 miles of sewers.

The existing Works at Marsh Green will be duplicated and a Pumping Station put down at Whitemoor to deal with sewage below gravitation level.

The Marsh Green Works, although overtaxed, continue to give efficient service and the effluent is highly satisfactory.

RIVERS AND STREAMS :—These are supervised by the County Authorities and no complaints have been made by these Authorities during the year.

PUBLIC CLEANSING :—The removal of ashes, etc., is carried out by the Council's staff. Steps have been taken to provide a more efficient method of collecting ; removal with motor vehicles.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION :—

Approved Water Closets	...	...	...	444
Waste Water and hand flushed Closets	...			1
Privies—Pail System	...	...	...	1287
Privies—Cesspool	...	...	...	134
Privies converted to Water Closets	...	...		0
Pails converted to Water Closets	...	...		12

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA :—

Inspections during the year	...	...	...	380
Notices served—Statutory	...	...	...	Nil
„ „ Informal	...	...	...	61

SMOKE ABATEMENT :—No industrial smoke nuisance exists in the district, consequently no specific action has been necessary.

SCHOOLS :—The water supply to the Schools in this district has been satisfactory during the year and sanitary conditions at all schools are good.

Prevalence of, and Control over Infectious and other Diseases.

2 The total number of Infectious Cases notified was 126, a noticeable increase on the figures for 1936, and approaching more nearly those of 1935 (131.)

There were 8 more cases of scarlet fever than in the previous year but 42 cases of diphtheria, as against 19, account for practically the entire increase in the total number of notifications. 2 cases were notified on December 22nd, just as the schools were about to close, and 7 more before the end of the year, during the Christmas holidays. 8 of the nine cases were girls and 1 a boy. The girls were in one school but spread over 3 classes. Owing to the schools being closed for holidays and staffs and children being scattered, it was not easy to trace the contacts, but on balance this closure was a good thing.

Pneumonia cases numbered 44, exactly the same as in 1936. I am unable to give the number treated in hospital.

One cerebro-spinal fever case was treated with serum at home but died.

The solitary case of Dysentery was of the Flexner type.

No case of puerperal pyrexia was notified, and this also applies to ophthalmia neonatorum.

As West Heath Sanatorium had been obviously incapable of satisfying the demands made upon its accommodation, the Joint Hospital Board has decided to build an extension to the Hospital, such extension to be laid out on the cubicle system. In the meantime arrangements have been made with neighbouring authorities for use of some of their beds, should occasion arise.

4. (a) Prevention of Blindness.

Provision is made for the protection of the eyes of Council Employees. The Council is waiting reply from the County Council as to whether we should adopt a scheme of our own, or fit in as part of a general County scheme. Our proximity to the N. S. Royal Infirmary, with its well organised Eye department, coupled with the facilities afforded by the Haywood Hospital, have long given Biddulph ample protection as regards "The prevention of blindness and the treatment of persons suffering from any disease or injury to the eyes."

(b) Tuberculosis. No action was necessary.

Biddulph Grange Orthopaedic Hospital.

Mr. Ostick has supplied me with the following figures, relating to new residents, whether patients or staff.

DICK TEST.	Number of patients tested	...	...	100
	,, ,, ,, found positive	...		38
	,, ,, ,, ,, negative	...		62

The positive cases were immunised with Burroughs Wellcome
S. F. Prophylactic Toxins "A" and "D."

SHICK TEST.	Number of patients tested	...	...	90
	,, ,, ,, found positive	...		33
	,, ,, ,, ,, negative	...		57

The positive cases were immunised with Burroughs Wellcome
Toxoid Antitoxin Flocules.

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1937

Disease					Total Cases notified	Admitted to Hospital	Deaths
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	34	28	1
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	42	35	...
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	44	...	6
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	4	...	...
Cerebro-spinal Fever	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Dysentery	...	...	...	...	1	1	...

Analysis of the total notified cases under age-groups

Age Periods	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Pneumonia	Erysipelas	Cerebro-spinal fever	Dysentery
Under 1 year	...	1	3	...	...	...
1	2	...	3	...	1	...
2	...	3	1	...	...	...
3	3	3	5	...	...	...
4	3	...	...	...	...	...
5	9	19	5	...	...	...
10	15	9	2	...	...	...
15	...	3	...	...	...	...
20	1	3	8	1	...	...
35	1	1	6	1	...	...
45	...	...	3	1	...	...
65 and over	...	...	8	1	...	1
Totals	34	42	44	4	1	1

Tuberculosis - new cases and mortality during 1937

AGE PERIODS			NEW CASES				DEATHS			
			Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
25	...	...	1	3	1	2	...	...	...	...
35	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	1	1	...
45	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
55	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
65 and upwards	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Totals			3	6	2	3	1	3	1	...

2 cases came to my knowledge otherwise than by primary notification. One was a case of military tuberculosis who died in hospital and was certified after post mortem; the other was a female pulmonary case discharged from Dispensary as "recovered." This was a 1929 case of which I had no record.

Notification of tuberculosis is efficiently done in this Area.

County Bacteriological Laboratory, Stafford.

Report on Specimens sent from Biddulph.

1937	No. of Swabs Throat and Nose	Diphtheria Bacillus	No Diphtheria Bacillus	Streptococcus	Yeasts
January	11	...	11	...	...
February	15	5	10	4	2
March	7	1	6	2	...
April	9	1	8	...	...
May	1	...	1	...	...
June	9	...	9	2	1
July	1	...	1	...	1
August	6	3	3	1	...
September	1	...	1	...	...
October	3	...	3	...	1
November ... ..	...	...	...	...	...
December	5	1	4	...	...
Totals	68	11	57	9	5

Sputum Examinations 46 ; Tubercle Bacillus found in 7
Blood specimens 5 ; all negative to typhoid and paratyphoid.

1 positive to B. Dysentery—Flexner Group.

Fæces specimens 4 ; all negative to typhoid and dysentery.

Cerebro-spinal fluid, 1 positive.

Two notifications of suspected Anthrax cases were received.

Both of these notifications were cancelled. (Anthrax Order 1928)

Form 124 E.

School Notifications of Actual or Suspected Illness, and Contacts

School	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Measles	Influenza and colds	Chicken pox	Whoop- ing Cough	Mumps
Biddulph Central Boys	...	4	...	85	2	...	...
„ „ Girls	6	5	...	71	9	...	...
„ „ Infants	3	7	5	66	28	21	...
Knypersley Mixed ...	3	3	2	123	3	...	1
„ Infants ...	2	4	15	11	20	18	...
Biddulph Moor Mixed	...	...	...	17	3	...	...
„ „ Infants	...	...	...	32	17	3	...
Totals 584	14	23	17	405	82	42	1

These figures show how seriously "Influenza" affected most of the Schools. It was most prevalent in January, and many of the various staffs were also disabled by it.

Biddulph Maternity and Welfare Centre, 1937.

Health Visiting.

Total visits to children under 1 year ...	...	810
1 to 5 years ...	...	1724
Expectant Mothers ...		77
		<hr/> 2611 <hr/>

Infant Welfare Centre (Wednesdays)

Attendance of children under 1 year	742
1 to 5 years	873
		<hr/> 1615 <hr/>

Number of children examined by doctor ...	1026
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NURSE WHITAKER.

Ante-natal Clinic and Welfare Centre (Thursdays)

Expectant Mothers—First attendances ...	40
Revisits ...	63
	<hr/> 103 <hr/>
Infants—First attendance under 1 year ...	61
between 1 and 5 years	20
Total attendance—under 1 year ...	639
between 1 and 5 years	759
	<hr/> 1398 <hr/>

Health Visiting.

Expectant Mothers—First visits ...	21
Revisits ...	16
Infants—First visits under 1 year ...	124
between 1 and 5 years ...	37
Revisits—under 1 year ...	871
between 1 and 5 years ...	1294
Number of cases examined by doctor ...	938

NURSE TURNER.

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS & WORKPLACES

1. Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises	Number of		
	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories (Including Factory Laundries)	35	...	...
Workshops (Including Workshop Laundries)	56	...	...
Workplaces (Other than Outworkers premises)	...	...	...
Total ...	91	...	...

2. Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces. NIL

Outwork in Unwholesome Premises (Section 108) NIL

*(Signed) James Craig, Medical Officer of Health.
18th Feb. 1938*

NOTE.

On 20th May I received amended figures from the Registrar General agreeing with mine.

The totals and death-rate on page 3 of this Report are therefore correct. The deaths numbered 108 ; 61 males and 47 females.

